Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for operating a transport interface to a plurality of local Fibre Channel ports, said method comprising:

locally generating ready indications for said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports; and

distributing transmission of said ready indications among said local Fibre Channel ports responsive to a desired bandwidth sharing between Fibre Channel links terminated by said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports;

wherein said transmission of said ready indications to said local Fibre Channel ports are delayed based on said desired bandwidth sharing.

Claim 2 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein said ready indications are generated locally within said transport interface.

Claim 3 (original): The method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving a buffer credit value from a first one of said local Fibre Channel ports;

modifying said buffer credit value responsive to buffer space within said transport interface; and

transmitting said modified buffer credit value to a remote Fibre Channel port via a transport network.

Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 1 further comprising:

controlling transmission of said ready indications to said local Fibre Channel ports responsive to availability of buffer space at a remote transport interface.

Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 1 further comprising:

relaying traffic from said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports to a plurality of remote Fibre Channel ports via a transport network; and

wherein combined maximum data rates of Fibre Channel links terminated by said plurality of Fibre Channel ports through said transport network exceeds bandwidth available via said transport network.

Claim 6 (original): The method of claim 5 further comprising:

suppressing relaying of ready indications from said plurality of remote Fibre Channel ports to said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports.

Claim 7 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein said desired bandwidth sharing comprises a default equal sharing of bandwidth among said local Fibre Channel ports.

Claim 8 (original): The method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving input selecting said desired bandwidth sharing.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A computer-readable medium storing computer-executable instructions program product for operating a transport interface to a plurality of local Fibre Channel ports, said product instructions comprising:

code that causes local generation of ready indications for said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports;

code that causes distribution of transmission of said ready indications among said local Fibre Channel ports responsive to a desired bandwidth sharing between Fibre Channel links terminated by said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports; and

a computer-readable storage medium that stores the codes;

wherein said transmission of said ready indications to said local Fibre Channel ports are delayed based on said desired bandwidth sharing.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The computer-readable medium product of claim 9 wherein said ready indications are generated locally within said transport interface.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The computer-readable medium product of claim 9 wherein said instructions further comprise comprising:

code that causes reception of a buffer credit value from a first one of said local Fibre Channel ports;

code that causes modification of said buffer credit value responsive to buffer space within said transport interface; and

code that causes transmission of said modified buffer credit value to a remote Fibre Channel port via a transport network.

Claim 12 (currently amended): The computer-readable medium product of claim 9 wherein said instructions further comprise comprising:

code that causes control of transmission of said ready indications to said local Fibre Channel ports responsive to availability of buffer space at a remote transport interface.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The computer-readable medium product of claim 9 wherein said instructions further comprise further comprising:

code that causes relaying of traffic from said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports to a plurality of remote Fibre Channel ports via a transport network; and

wherein combined maximum data rates of Fibre Channel links terminated by said plurality of Fibre Channel ports through said transport network exceeds bandwidth available via said transport network.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The computer-readable medium product of claim 13 wherein said instructions further comprise further comprising:

code that suppresses relaying ready indications from said plurality of remote Fibre Channel ports to said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports.

Claim 15 (currently amended): The computer-readable medium product of claim 9 wherein said desired bandwidth sharing comprises a default equal sharing of bandwidth among said local Fibre Channel ports.

Claim 16 (currently amended): The computer-readable medium product of claim 9 wherein said instructions further comprise comprising:

code that causes receipt of input selecting said desired bandwidth sharing.

Claim 17 (currently amended): Apparatus for operating a transport interface to a plurality of local Fibre Channel ports, said apparatus comprising:

means for locally generating ready indications for said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports; and

means for distributing transmission of said ready indications among said local Fibre Channel ports responsive to a desired bandwidth sharing between Fibre Channel links terminated by said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports;

wherein said transmission of said ready indications to said local Fibre Channel ports are delayed based on said desired bandwidth sharing.

Claim 18 (currently amended): Apparatus for operating a transport interface to a plurality of local Fibre Channel ports, said apparatus comprising:

an integrated circuit or plurality of integrated circuits that locally generate ready indications for said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports, and distribute transmission of said ready indications among said local Fibre Channel ports responsive to a desired bandwidth sharing between Fibre Channel links terminated by said plurality of local Fibre Channel ports, and delay said transmission of said ready indications to said local Fibre Channel ports based on said desired bandwidth sharing.

Claim 19 (new): The method of claim 1 wherein bandwidth unused by one of said Fibre Channel links is available for another of said Fibre Channel links

Claim 20 (new): The method of claim 1 wherein said delay is generally equal to the reciprocal of a frame rate permitted by a bandwidth allocated to the Fibre Channel link and based on a frame size of a received frame.

Claim 21 (new): The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving a login message from a remote channel port and adjusting a granted credit based on available ingress buffer space at the transport interface.

Claim 22 (new): The apparatus of claim 18 wherein said ready indications are transmitted to the local Fibre Channel ports only if permitted by flow control between the transport interface and a remote transport interface.

Claim 23 (new): The apparatus of claim 18 further comprising an ingress buffer configured for use in oversubscription and an egress buffer configured for use in flow control.